

REMARKS

As recited in new claims 14 and 16, the treatment liquid consists essentially of the stain blocking agent and the sulfated castor oil having a pH of at most 7, to thereby exclude those ingredients which materially affect the basic and novel characteristics of the invention.

New claims 13 and 15 recite mixing a stain blocking agent, a sulfated castor oil having an unsaturated bond and optionally water to prepare a treatment liquid comprising a stain blocking agent and the sulfated castor oil having an unsaturated bond and having a pH of at most at 7. Support is found, for example, at page 5, line 1 of the specification A characteristic feature of sulfated castor oil is that it has an unsaturated bond. In the exemplary compound shown at page 5, line 1 of the specification, the unsaturated bond is at the position $-\text{CH}(\text{CH}_2)_7-$.

Entry of the amendments and the Examiner's favorable consideration of claims 1-8 and 11-16 is respectfully requested.

Review and reconsideration on the merits are requested.

Claims 1-8, 11 and 12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 4,937,123 to Chang et al. In the Advisory Action dated January 29, 2004, the Examiner maintained that the present claims encompass Chang et al which is said to teach preparing a solution of sulfated castor oil, deionized water and methacrylic acid having a pH of at most 7. In the Examiner's view, there is no difference between the claimed sulfated castor oil and the sulfated castor oil used in the treatment solution of Chang et al.

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Applicants traverse, and respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider in view of the following remarks.

As discussed in the “Remarks” portion of the Amendment filed December 11, 2003, the sulfated castor oil in Chang et al is copolymerized with acrylate monomers to give a methacrylic polymer, whereas in the present invention the treatment liquid is prepared by mixing a stain blocking agent selected from a phenol-formaldehyde condensate, an acrylic polymer and a mixture of a phenol/formaldehyde condensate and acrylic polymer (i.e., a polymer), sulfated castor oil and optionally water. Importantly, the sulfated castor oil (having an unsaturated bond) cannot react with the previously polymerized stain blocking agent.

The Advisory Action mischaracterizes Chang et al as teaching a method of “preparing a solution of sulfated castor oil and deionized water and methacrylic acid having a pH of at most 7”. Rather, Chang et al teaches a method of preparing a solution of a methacrylic polymer which may contain sulfated castor oil as a monomer component, water and having a pH of at most 7. See column 2, lines 57-65 and claim 1 (the treating solution comprises a copolymer of methacrylic acid); column 3, line 48-column 4, line 5 and claim 4 (sulfated castor oil is a representative comonomer); and polymers A, F and H in Table 1 in the Preparation Example at column 6 (preparation of copolymer of methacrylic acid and sulfated castor oil). In Example 1 at column 8, Chang et al mixed Polymer A (i.e., a copolymer of methacrylic acid and sulfated castor oil) with water and adjusted the pH to 4.0. Contrary to the Examiner’s assertion, Chang et al does not prepare a solution of a sulfated castor oil, water and methacrylic acid.

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The present claims require a treatment liquid comprising a stain blocking agent (which is a polymer selected from a phenol-formaldehyde condensate, an acrylic polymer and a mixture of a phenol/formaldehyde condensate and acrylic polymer) and a sulfated castor oil as a component separate from the stain blocking agent. On the other hand, the treatment liquid of Chang et al contains a copolymer of methacrylic acid and sulfated castor oil, but does not contain sulfated castor oil. Therefore, the claimed treatment liquid (which contains sulfated castor oil as an essential component) does not encompass the treatment liquid of Chang et al (which does not contain a sulfated castor oil), and the treatment liquid of Chang et al is outside the scope of the claimed treatment liquid. Moreover, there is nothing in Chang et al which teaches the desirability of modifying the treatment liquid of Chang et al so as to contain sulfated castor oil. Although the Examiner maintains that there is no difference between the sulfated castor oil of Chang et al and that of the invention, Applicants respectfully disagree. The treatment liquid of Chang et al does not contain sulfated castor oil; rather, it contains a copolymer of methacrylic acid and sulfated castor oil. This is different than the treatment liquid of the present invention which contains sulfated castor oil as a component distinct from the stain blocking agent.

For the above reasons, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1-8, 11 and 12 are neither anticipated nor obvious over Chang et al, and withdrawal of the foregoing rejection is respectfully requested.

To further distinguish over Chang et al, Applicants present herein new claims 13-16 for the Examiner's consideration. Claims 13 and 15 recite that the treatment liquid comprises a stain blocking agent and a sulfated castor oil having an unsaturated bond. The claimed sulfated castor

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oil having an unsaturated bond is clearly different from the monomer component of a methacrylic polymer of Chang et al and which has no unsaturated bond. Claims 14 and 16 recite with the treatment liquid consists essentially of the stain blocking agent and the sulfated castor oil.

Withdrawal of all rejections and allowance of claims 1-8 and 11-16 is earnestly solicited.

In the event that the Examiner believes that it may be helpful to advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the local Washington, D.C. telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Date: February 11, 2004